WITHIN OUR BORDERS

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Spring Operations Almost Complete

Alberta's 89,000-Odd Farms Again Ready To Produce Bumper Crops

Alberta's farmers have been back on the land for several weeks now. Because of the unusually early season, some have completed spring operations but others have been held up by dry soil conditions. The dryness and the winds have made seeding a risky business in some sections of the Province.

The farmers, generally speaking, were highly pleased when it became apparent that they would be able to work the land at an earlier date than had been possible for many years. Today, however, most of them are more than a little worried about the prospects for a good crop year. Very little moisture was left on the surface when last winter's light snowfall melted and there has been practically no general rainfall since seeding got underway.

Faced with the prospect of poor seed germination, unless there is a good general rain, farmers are inclined to believe that the preparatory work of the past few months might be wasted.

To many persons, mention of spring operations brings to mind a picture of broad, black fields being seeded and little more. Actually, before seeding can be started the farmers must spend many hours preparing land and implements for this stage of the work.

Most farmers utilized the short winter days to overhaul the cultivating and seeding equipment which would be needed in the spring. In some instances cleaning and lubricating was all that was necessary. In other cases implements had to be completely stripped down. Worn plow shares and springs were renewed and tires checked for deterioration.

The 50,000 tractors in use on Alberta's farms received the most careful attention. Far-sighted farmers were quick to turn their machines in to the repair shops during the slack winter months when they could be certain sufficient time would be spent to ensure a first-class overhaul. Other farmers left this important job until the last minute and repair shops in all parts of the Province have been working overtime in an effort to get the machines back in the hands of the farmers and on the land.

Many farmers spread the winter accumulation of natural fertilizer over their fields just before the snow melts so as to take advantage of the penetration afforded as the frost gradually leaves the soil. This year the early thaw caught most of them by surprise and they were forced to further delay this job until the fields had dried enough to bear the weight of tractors and spreaders.

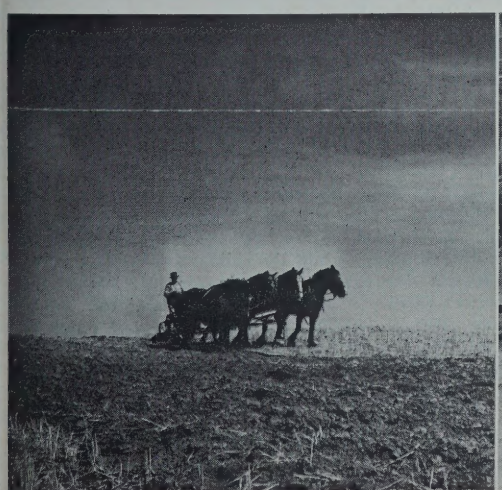
On a number of farms, particularly the large grain-growing units in southern Alberta, most of March and early April was devoted to cleaning grain. To prevent damage by smut, and weed infestation, the seed was run through fanning mills and dusting hoppers.

In southern Alberta more than 90 percent of the seeding was completed before the end of April but farmers are not overly optimistic about crop prospects. A major grasshopper outbreak is expected and due to the warm, dry weather hatching has already commenced. More than 1,500,000 cultivated acres are likely to be involved in the outbreak and farmers are busy exercising all possible control measures. Cultural practises, designed to expose the eggs to dessication by wind, rain and predators for as long a period as possible, have been followed since operations on the land commenced. At the moment some 75 stations are distributing poison bait and insecticide in danger areas.

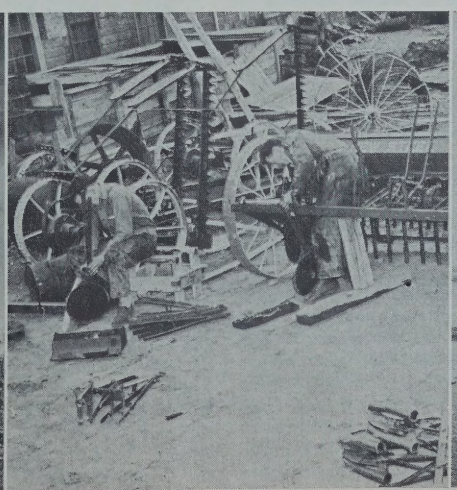
Since the land has been dry enough to work farmers in other parts of the Province have been cultivating the surface in a manner designed to control the growth of wild oats and other noxious weeds. Most farmers prefer to let the wild oats grow to the three-leaf stage at which time they go over the land with a surface cultivator. This destroys many of the wild oats and leaves the land in a healthy state for the sowing of cereal and forage crops.

Farmers in central and northern Alberta were more than a little worried when winds in late April caused considerable local soil drifting. The damage, was negligible, however, and the concensus today is that the yield and grade will be normal if a good rainfall comes soon.

This year's output from the Province's 89,000 farms will not likely exceed the $278,737,000 worth of grain and feed produced in 1948 but it won't be the fault of the farmers. They've been busy for a long time and they'll be busy until grain from the last sheaf is threshed and delivered to the elevators next fall. * * *



A few Alberta farms still rely on horse power.



Assembling new cultivating implements.

One of Alberta's 50,000 tractor units.

—Alberta Government Photos.

"And they lived happily ever after . . . "

This room is a fairyland of things to play with.

Almost more fun than mud pies in an alley.
—Alberta Government Photos.

Kindergartens Outlet For Surplus Energy

Youngsters Scramble Over Adjustments Necessary For Entrance Into "Full-Time" Public School Classes

(This is the second in a series of Within Our Borders articles dealing with special types of children's classrooms in the Province. It was prepared by D. T. Oviatt, supervisor, Teachers' Service Bureau.)

It has been said that the best way to make children be good is to make them happy. The kindergarten has made better use of this advice than any other section of the entire school system.

A modern kindergarten room is so designed and operated that at first glance a casual visitor might well suppose its prime purpose to be first-rate entertainment for five-year-olds. A closer look will quickly reveal goals other than simply providing a good time for kiddies. These children are getting a head start in the difficult adjustments of school attendance. Many of the little wrinkles of social living are ironed out before the regular full-day school experience begins.

Kindergarten is designed particularly to meet the needs of the pre-school age group. City living has meant many changes for the modern family. First, of course, there are fewer children. Houses or apartments are smaller with play space at a premium. Streets are danger zones. Parks and playgrounds are not always adequately supervised. One or both parents work away from home during the day. Recreation is largely commercialized on an away-from-home basis.

Children on the other hand remain the most natural and active of all people. They like to run and jump. They clutter the floor with toys and cover the walls with cutouts and drawings. They sing and dance and dramatize with gusto. Many of the things they love to do just can't be done in crowded city living. The kindergarten is an attempt to remove many of the obstacles modern social living puts in way of little children.

Three Major Aims

It has three major purposes:

(1) To give the child opportunity for expression. Physical activity, dramatic play, rhythm and dancing, pets and toys are all natural interests of a normal, healthy youngster. City living deprives him of many experiences he needs for self development. Kindergarten rooms and programs are planned to provide for natural, wholesome activities.

(2) To teach proper conduct in social groups. Many families have but one or two children, frequently with considerable difference in ages. Social contacts in supervised groups are important if the child is to learn the art of social co-operation. Each child needs a chance to be a leader as well as a follower, a listener as well as a speaker, a giver as well as a receiver. Child interests are naturally self-centred, and co-operative living has to be learned. Our schools aim to make the improvement of human relationship the primary goal of education. Kindergarten experiences approach the problem of living together in a realistic manner.

(3) To prepare the child for regular classroom learning. Every primary teacher knows that most children do not come to school ready and anxious to undertake regular lessons. They must first adjust to the new atmosphere of a classroom. They must learn what reading, printing and number work are all about before they are ready to launch into the learning of these skills for themselves. Psychologists insist that learning hinges upon two things: first, the desire to learn; second, the meaning attached to the material. Kindergarten aims to develop the readiness and meaning pre-requisite to regular lessons. Children with kindergarten attendance consistently do better in the primary grades than do children without that background.

Calgary Wins Honor

Credit for the first organized attempt at public kindergarten classes in Alberta must go to the city of Calgary. About 1939 a kindergarten class was opened in one Calgary school to accommodate children from nearby tenement blocks. It carried along in a rather indifferent manner for a couple of years. Enrolment was low and attendance irregular. The possibility of closing the class was discussed. Then, rather suddenly, the people of Calgary realized the value of this service that was at hand.

Enrolment and attendance picked up. Parents became anxious to get their children's names on the waiting list. Requests from Home and School Associations and community groups for more classes became insistent. Today, the Calgary Public School Board operates 25 kindergarten classes with a total enrolment of 30 pupils. Each class has a waiting list, in some cases up to 20 names. Calgary officials estimate that to meet the demand completely would require twice the present staff and accommodation.

Enrolment Limited

Class enrolment is limited to 30. Pupils are selected on the basis of age, the oldest child being given the preference. New pupils are accepted whenever a vacany occurs, regardless of the time of year. All materials are provided free of charge. The staff are selected from the successful experienced primary teachers of the city. Without exception they are enthusiastic and talented, with special sympathy and understanding for little folks. Periodically they meet as a group to discuss difficulties, arrange programs and exchange ideas.

The rooms are specially designed for active living. In the new elementary buildings special classrooms are included. In older buildings rooms are modified or renovated. The furniture, including tables and chairs, sand tables, and easels, is built for comfort and mobility. The windows are plentiful and the decorating is light and colorful. Coat hooks, blackboards and washroom facilities are low enough for easy use. The floors are covered with linoleum, inlaid with designs of clock faces, circles, squares, numbers and lines. Generally a small fireplace adds to the pleasant informality.

Classes attend for a half day only, and one teacher usually handles two classes. Hours are from 9:00 to 11:30 or 1:30 to 3:30. The periods are short, about 15 minutes each. Opening exercises include a child's prayer, hymn, possibly a Bible story, health inspection, and conversations on topics of child interest. Rhythms, singing and actions songs are combined with dramatic play. Recesses are replaced by self-directed play periods where the child chooses his own activity, so long as he does not disturb other members of the group.

Group Discussions

The story period introduces a chance for group discussion, nursery rhymes and speech training. The rest period is sometimes accompanied by a light lunch or milk. The handiwork period, when the child colors with crayon or paint, cuts and pastes, models, draws, and sews is longer. He learns to use his hands effectively and to handle different tools and materials.

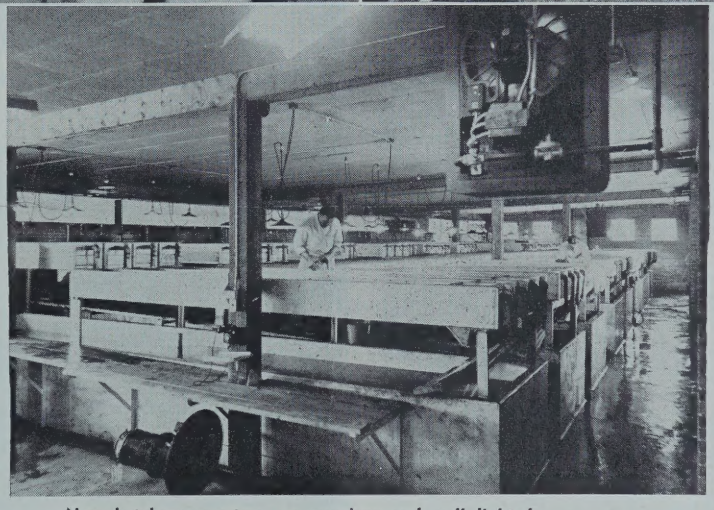
Occasional excursions within the immediate community stress community life and safety education. The clean-up period ends the day before dismissal.

The entire program is flexible and informal. It aims to emphasize a keener observation of the immediate community and an enriched experience in group living. The variety of activities allows a balance between mental and physical activity, relaxation and exertion. The problems of the regular grades that will follow are always in mind.

The transition from the comparative freedom of the home to the more formal conditions of the school is easy and natural. Above all each child is recognized as a child with his own ways and personality. For each, the kindergarten smooths out many little bumps in the process of growing up. * * *

Hatchery assistant examining a few of the 750,000 young fish.

In 30 days these imported eggs will be just about ready to hatch.



New hatchery quarters are spacious and well lighted.

—Photos by *Lorne Burkell*, Calgary.

Calgary Fish Hatchery

At one time or another you've likely heard some of the hackneyed, time worn stories fishermen tell about the big ones, "I'm telling you; it was this—long," that got away, "just when I almost had it!" And you've probably been a little sceptical too. Well, this is a fish story but it won't tax your credulity. It tells how those big ones got into the streams in the first place and gave the superlative-tongued fishermen something to tell their doubting friends about.

The big ones that will star in the fish stories yet to be dreamed up are probably getting a start in life right now at a hatchery in Calgary. A joint project of the Fisheries Branch, Provincial Department of Lands and Forests, and the Calgary Brewing and Malting Co. Ltd., the eight-year-old hatchery plays an important part in the job of keeping the Province's waterways stocked with game fish.

Government Staff

Quarters and water supply for the hatchery, are supplied by the Calgary Brewing and Malting Co., Ltd., while the Alberta Government provides the staff, fish and operational material. From six tanks or boxes at the time of its inception the hatchery has grown rapidly until at present there are 72 boxes. This rapid increase recently made it necessary to move the project to larger quarters.

There are close to 750,000 young fish in the Calgary hatchery and tending to their various needs keeps Superintendent Alex Sinclair and his assistants, Randolph Wileman and Paul Labonte busy at all times. Small though they are, the young fry need four or five meals a day and that in itself involves a great deal of work.

Life in the hatchery is certainly a progressive one as far as the fish are concerned. First of all fertilized eggs, or eyed eggs as they are more commonly known, are imported from Massachusetts, Wyoming and other points in the United States. On arrival at the hatchery the eggs, usually three weeks old, are placed on wire grids above long, narrow tanks. Temperature in the tank room is carefully controlled at all times and over a period of about 30 days the eggs are subjected to sufficient heat to bring them to the hatching stage. As the eggs hatch the young fry fall through the grids into the tanks and get their first introduction to the truly aquatic way of life. Frequent feeding on a diet of ground beef, horse liver and specially prepared fish meal follows. The young fry grow rapidly and soon have to be moved to the large, concrete reservoirs located below the narrow tanks. In both types of tank, water at a controlled temperature circulates constantly and ensures the young fish of an abundant supply of oxygen-rich water.

Open-Air Tanks

When the fish in the large tanks grow to the point where their style is cramped by the limited quarters they are moved to open-air ponds if weather conditions are favorable. The Fisheries Branch maintains outdoor ponds at Pincher Creek, Cardston, Raven and Calgary. Fish from the hatchery remain in these ponds until they reach a size at which they will be able to fend for themselves in the open waters of the Province's lakes, rivers and streams. Then, in fast-travelling, specially constructed trucks they are moved to predetermined points and liberated.

Just where the hatchery graduates will go is up to Dr. R. B. Miller of the University of Alberta Zoology Department. Each year, Dr. Miller conducts comprehensive surveys of the Provincial waterways and advises officials of the Fisheries Branch as to which streams are suitable for replenishing and what varieties should be used in each case.

Five Species

Five species of trout; rainbow, cutthroat, eastern brook, Loch Leven and lake, are handled under the regular program of the hatchery. Other varieties, such as albinos, are raised for purely experimental purposes. Albinos are afflicted with extremely poor eyesight; so poor in fact that they could not survive if released in the streams. For this reason theirs is a life of guaranteed security even if it is somewhat limited by the size of the hatchery tanks.

Being part of the biggest fish story in the Province is quite interesting according to Mr. Sinclair and his assistants. They claim fish are not so dumb and as proof point out that some fish spend a lot of time attempting to jump from one tank to another so they can ride back on the current. Mr. Sinclair says the fish are instinctively cannibalistic and it is strictly a case of "dog eat dog." The large fish eat the middle size of fish and the middle size fish eat the small fish. It is not uncommon to see a young fish streaking around a tank with the half-swallowed body of a smaller fish protruding from its jaws.

Last year the hatchery supplied more than 800,000 fish to replenish Alberta's streams. This year it is expected the output will be almost doubled. Finishing touches have been put on the new quarters and the staff now expects to be able to settle into normal routine and increase production. When this happens the hatchery will be more than able to meet the demand for healthy, young stock. At least that's what local and tourist fishermen, behind the project 100 percent, are counting on. * * *

Stony Plain Library Reorganized By Volunteer Workers

(This story, contributed to Within Our Borders by Mrs. C. R. Wood, one of the two women members of the Alberta Legislature, should prove of particular interest to the towns and villages of Alberta where there are no library facilities. This actual account of how library facilities were re-established at Stony Plain through the interest of residents of the district shows that such a community project can be accomplished to the benefit of all people, both young and old, in the district.)

The history of the Stony Plain Association Library goes back to 1944, when the young people of the United Church in Stony Plain, started a library and housed it in an office on Main Street. Through volunteer help from the young people the library was successfully attended to on the days when it was open, until several of them went away to take up other work and educational training.

Rental of the office to a paying tenant, forced those in charge of the library, to find other quarters. These were found in the vacant dining room of the hotel. Later the owner of the hotel decided to remodel the building and he asked that the library be moved. There being no other place available, the books were moved to the Town Hall.

As more and more of the young people interested in library work left town, it reached the stage where no one took responsibility for the library. A Library Board of adults was set up to handle things, but this also failed to give proper supervision of the books and service to readers, since there was a shortage of library attendants.

Many Books Lost

The Town Hall was open to the public most of the time, and with no one in attendance, books were taken out by anyone and no records kept. Many returned them, but others were not so thoughtful and there is no telling how many books have been lost. It is known that out of a complete set of Mark Twain's works, only one volume remains.

Realizing the situation and recognizing the need for good library service to the community, the Stony Plain Women's Institute undertook to "mother" the orphaned library. Early in January, 1948, a delegation from the W.I. met with the Library Board members and asked to sponsor the library. Permission was granted and a public meeting called. All organizations in the town were invited to send representatives. Richard MacDonald, Co-ordinator of Cultural Activities, Provincial Department of Economic Affairs; Miss Audrey Ladler, assistant; and Mrs. Edith Gostick, Provincial Librarian, also were invited and they offered many helpful suggestions and valuable information.

It was decided to form a Stony Plain Association Library sponsored by the Stony Plain Women's Institute. A board of seven persons from various organizations was elected. These were: Mrs. A. G. Baker, Mrs. H. Russell, Mrs. S. Hadley, Mr. J. L. Newcombe, Mr. H. Anderson, Mr. D. Dale and myself.

Election Held

At the first meeting of the board I was elected chairman and Mrs. Baker, secretary-treasurer. Application was made to the Minister of Economic Affairs to form an Association Library and this was accepted. The former Library Board transferred the money on hand, amounting to approximately $50. Work then was started on getting the books under lock and key and proper supervision.

With permission of the Town Council and the generous help of the the members of the Kinsmen Club, a portion of the Town Hall was partitioned off and some new shelves made. The Home and School Association donated $25; The Women's Institute, $75; two groups of young people donated $5 each, a Church Ladies' Aid another $5 and two teas brought in around $50. These together with personal donations of $10 and membership fees amounting to approximately $50 made a fund for the purchase of new books.

Mrs. Hadley and myself took the Library Short Course given by the University Extension Department and before the library was officially opened, a short course was conducted by us for volunteers from the various organizations, who were interested in helping in the library as attendants and workers. Twenty-eight men and women took this course and work was started on accessioning, cataloguing, filing, and placing books on shelves.

Library Is Opened

The library was opened October 19, 1948, with 696 of the former books and gifts from various interested people and in March this year there were over 1,600 books properly accessioned, catalogued and on the shelves. The library is open three afternoons and one evening a week and 28 people take turns attending. There is no burden of work upon a few.

Children have been encouraged to use the library and although many were steady readers of comics, they are gradually and steadily turning to reading literature of better quality. There are 143 members of whom 66 are juveniles. To show how interest has developed, the Circulation Book shows that the following numbers of books have been taken out each month since the library opened. In November, adults took 74 books, and juveniles, 123. In December, adults took 137 and juveniles 140, in January, adults 180 and juveniles 269 and in February adults 171 and juveniles 354.

These facts show that if facilities are provided young people, children especially, will read better material which undoubtedly will have its effect in building character. It is the aim of the Library Board to start a "Story Hour" for the younger children soon, with a view to encouraging them to appreciate better literature.

The board has had the fullest co-operation from the people in the town and district and it is hoped that a worthwhile library service will be maintained for the reading public of the community for a great many years. * * *

The library's reference books prove a boon to students.

Everycne, regardless of age, enjoys a good fiction story.
—Alberta Government Photos.

"Within Our Borders" is a publication designed to acquaint the people of the Province with the administration and services of the Alberta Government.

It is believed the many and varied services of the Government will be effective in the degree they are known and used. Any material used is for immediate republication.

Correspondence concerning the publication should be addressed to the Deputy Minister, Department of Economic Affairs, Legislative Buildings, Edmonton.

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